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MUSLIM
SUNRISE

APRIL 1975

VOLUME XLII

NUMBER 2

THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

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THE MUSLIM SUNRISE is the official organ of
THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM, Inc.
This quarterly magazine was founded in 1921 by
Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq,
the first Muslim Missionary to the
United States of America.

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Printed at the Fazl-i-Umar Press, Pomeroy Road
P. O. Box 338, Athens, Ohio 45701

EDITORIAL

ISLAM AND ITS UNIVERSAL TEACHINGS

The fundamental doctrines and basic beliefs of Islam have remained unchanged and unaltered ever since their inception. The formula of the faith of Islam — there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. — Belief in the absolute and unqualified Unity of God still forms the cornerstone of the Islamic faith. The universal teachings of Islam are practised and successfully demonstrated in all climes and under all circumstances across the globe.

The Holy Quran, revealed to the Prophet of Islam about fourteen hundred years ago, continues to offer the same original text without the slightest additions to or subtractions therefrom. The word of God — technically and literally the very word — not merely its spirit, according to God's promise, keeps on inspiring the faithful. This unique distinction of our Scriptures bears emphatic and eloquent testimony to its being meant for the entire mankind for all ages. The world Prophet brought a message for the whole of humanity, unlike his predecessors who were commissioned with limited and temporary injunctions suitable to the needs and requirements of their respective times. The people of those scriptures have since been tampering with their text and the revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation. The dogmas promulgated at the beginning are either being rejected in toto or being substantially given different interpretation from the one they were originally believed to convey.

Independent scholars, both temporal and spiritual, refuse to remain tied to the dogmas that fail to stand to reason and history. They are definitely veering to the reasonable and rational teachings of Islam. The characteristic doctrines of Christianity — the Trinity, the Godhood of Jesus Christ, the inherent sin, the Atonement and Resurrection — all seem to be losing hold on the Christian mind.

The discovery of the Holy Shroud, with all the attendant implications, has presented a problem to the Church. The

Promised Messiah, Hazrat Ahmad (1835-1908), had predicted in unambiguous words that before the expiry of the third century from his claim, Christians will entertain misgivings and shall give up their belief and there will be only one preceptor, Islam and its founder. That step by step and day by day, men that count in Christiandom are discarding the traditionally accepted Articles of their faith, is even evident from one of the latest publications on the Christian faith.

The scholarly review on the *Common Catechism*, recently published in America is a point in case. As many as 36 respected Catholic and Protestant theologians have declined to fall in line with almost all the traditional beliefs of the Church.

Hereunder, we reproduce the text of the comprehensive review published in the March 31, 1975, issue of the *TIME* magazine. With a view to signifying the particular beliefs and dogmas, the learned divines have refused to prescribe to, we have italicized its appropriate parts for the convenience of our readers. The heading, *Uncatechism*, is self explanatory and is suggestive of the radical change the authors desire to bring about in the generally accepted beliefs — Resurrection, Trinity, the nature of Scriptures, mortal sin and baptism — the fundamental doctrines on which the whole structure of Christianity stands.

The Uncatechism

"To generations of Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists, a catechism was a manual of questions and answers on doctrine that youngsters were expected to memorize. In a book billed as the first "ecumenical catechism" since the Reformation, the Q.-and-A. format and many of the old answers are missing. Adults, not children, have been its readers since it was published in West Germany and Switzerland two years ago.

Now translated into English, *The Common Catechism* (The Seabury Press; \$10.95) is timed for Easter release in the U.S. *Unlike traditional catechism, the new book has a meek tone.* For example, *it notes that Christ's Resurrection has been a "permanent problem" for modern man.* At one point *it defends belief in the Trinity by remarking diffidently that it "may not have been such a bad idea after all."*

The book is the joint product of 36 respected Protestant

and Catholic theologians, most of them German and German-Swiss, who were commissioned to write it by Europe's Herder publishing house. The *Catechism* grew out of conversations at Vatican Council II between the Rev. Lukas Vischer, the top theologian at the World Council of Churches, and his friend Father Johannes Feiner, who was later appointed to the Pope's theological commission. Although Vischer and Feiner edited the book, it lacks official Protestant status, and the Vatican has made no comment.

Continuing Disputes. Much of the *Catechism* covers themes that have always united Protestants and Catholics. The reality of God, the work of Christ, the importance of prayer. Building on years of ecumenical discussion, the book also claims substantial current Protestant-Catholic agreement on previous points of division like Christ's presence in the Eucharist. As for the Reformation's belief in salvation through "grace alone," as against man's good works, the *Catechism* professes to see little left to argue about. In fact, it contends that "it would certainly have been possible" to unite Protestants and Catholics except for continuing disputes on two topics: 1) the status of Mary in doctrine and worship, and 2) the structure and authority of the church, including the papacy.

The Catechism rejects a number of ideas that Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists have traditionally affirmed. For instance, the orthodox formulation of original sin is discarded. Because of it, old Catholic catechisms taught that it was a mortal sin not to baptize infants. The new *Catechism* says that "there can be no fundamental objections" if parents let children decide on their own whether to seek baptism, as Baptists do.

Following the trend of German scholarship, the book puts considerable limitations on the Bible. It says that "we can learn virtually nothing" from Scripture on specific questions of sexual morality. The ten Commandments are "to a large extent conditioned by their age." Many New Testament passages are described as interpretations that were made later on by the church instead of accounts of what Jesus said and did.

The Common Catechism rejects Pope Paul's 1968 decree

against artificial birth control and makes a strong case for Christian social involvement. Overall, the book is a useful survey of the kind of European liberalism that has guided Protestant ecumenism and that is increasingly attractive to ecumenically minded Catholics. Church Historian Martin Marty, a U.S. Lutheran, thinks that the book's "vision may be the only one open to 21st century Christians." On the other hand, it may be only the vision of an ecumenical theology, while many Protestants and Catholics cling as strongly as ever to the ideas contained in their traditional catechisms."

Contrarily, the five Pillars of Islam (declaration of faith in the Oneness of Allah and the Divine messengership of Muhammad, Prayers, Fasting, Almsgiving, Pilgrimage to the Holy Ka'aba at Mecca) along with the Articles of Faith, have all continued to be faithfully practised and adhered to by the followers of Islam of all persuasions throughout the world.
ISLAM ZINDABAD!

The current issue of the Muslim Sunrise is dedicated to the life and character (Seerat) of the Holy Founder of Islam and some of his teachings. — Ed.

THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD A PERFECT EXEMPLAR

(Excerpts from the text of the speech delivered by Imam M. S. Shahid, Missionary Incharge, on March 30, 1975, at Detroit, Michigan, (University Campus) on the *Seeratun Nabi* day.)

The Holy Founder of Islam (peace and blessings of God be on him) is the only prophet whom it was given to pass through every phase of life in order to demonstrate to the world through his personal example as to how to live. He was sent as a model and example for the whole of mankind. Says the Holy Quran:

"Verily, you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model, for him who hopes to meet Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much." (33:22).

He put into practice the precepts he taught. There is not a single injunction in the Holy Quran which the Prophet himself did not act upon. His wife, Ayesha, when questioned about the Prophet's morals, rightly remarked:

"The morals of the Holy Quran were the morals of the Holy Prophet."

Meaning thereby that he lived up to the teachings of the Holy Quran and faithfully carried out all that the Holy Quran commanded, and abstained from all that is prohibited. He passed through all stages of life, as a married man, a husband, a father, grandfather, a soldier, a general, a judge and a statesman, through both adverse and favorable positions in life. While still in his ripe youth he displayed such an excellent character of integrity and uprightness that he was acclaimed by friends and foes alike as *Al-Amin* (the Trustworthy) and *As-Saddooq* (the Truthful). When merely twenty five years of age, his reputation for integrity and honesty had spread over the whole of the town of Mecca, and a rich widow, Khadija, asked Muhammad to lead a trading caravan of hers to Syria. She was so impressed by his honesty and high moral character that she offered him her hand in marriage. He accepted and was married to Khadija who was nearly 15 years his senior in age.

Muhammad, a poor man orphaned in childhood, had his first peep into prosperity. But as soon as Khadija made over her property and her slaves to Muhammad, he set all the slaves free and had the larger part of the property distributed among the poor.

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) received his first revelation from Allah in the cave called Hira, he was greatly agitated and went home and narrated the whole experience to his wife Khadija who comforted him with these words:

“God is a witness, He has not sent you this word that you should fail and prove unworthy, then He should give you up. How can God do such a thing, while you are kind and considerate to your relations, help the poor and the needy and bear their burdens? You are restoring the virtues which had disappeared from our country. You treat guests with honor and help those who are in distress. Can you be subjected by God to any trial?” (Bukhari)

Such is the eloquent testimony of Muhammad’s wife to the excellence of his character!

When forced to quit Mecca and migrate to Medina under pressure of persecution, he had a number of deposits in his custody. What to do with the deposits was the question agitating his mind, while fleeing for his own life. He would not leave without returning all those to their respective owners. What a code of honor! Under these extraordinary circumstances, before leaving the house, he arranged the deposits to be returned to their owners through Hazrat Ali. Al-Amin proved Al-Amin in this fateful hour when the enemy sword was hanging over his head.

It was his effective teaching, exhortation and personal example that transformed a most rugged, uncivilized and unlettered people of Arabia into a disciplined and organized society in a short span of 23 years. How true is the Encyclopedia Britanica recording:

“Muhammad is the most successful of all the prophets and religious personalities.” (11th Ed. under *Koran*).

The Holy Prophet brought such a thorough change in the lives of his followers that no calamity or adversity could divert their resolve from their faith and the worship of the One true

God.

The Holy Prophet as a model for men for all situations in life, stands unique in hours of victory and triumph as well. The Prophet returned to Mecca as a Master and undisputed monarch. This was the place where he and his followers had been severely persecuted for almost 13 years and were forced to migrate to Medina. This was where some of the Muslim women were tied to two camels which were then driven in the opposite directions, where helpless Muslims were laid on burning sand under a scorching sun and then dragged upon hot stones. Now the Holy Prophet was an absolute Master. Mecca fell and the whole of Arabia lay prostrate at his feet and the time of reckoning had come.

The Holy Prophet addressed the Meccans and said. "You have seen how true the promises of God have proved. Now tell me what punishment you should have for the cruelties you afflicted against those whose only fault was that they invited you to the worship of the One God?" They besought him and said, "We expect you to treat us as Joseph treated his brothers." Tears came into the eyes of the Prophet when he heard them and said, "I will speak to you as Joseph spoke to his brothers. I will not reproach you today. God forgive you, for He is Merciful and loving. You are free." History fails to furnish a nobler and higher example of forgiveness and neighborly love. Rev. Bosworth Smith, in his book, *Muhammad and Muhammadanism*, says:

"Now would have been the moment to gratify his ambition, to satiate his lust, to glut his revenge. Read the account of the entry of Muhammad into Mecca side by side with that of Marius or Sulla into Rome. Compare all the attendant circumstances, the outrages that preceded, and the use by each of his recovered power and we shall then be in a position better to appreciate the magnanimity and moderation of the Prophet of Arabia. There were no proscription list, no plunder, no wanton revenge. From a helpless to the ruler of a big country was a great transition, yet the Holy Prophet retained the nobility of his character under all circumstances."

It was this nobility of character of the Holy Prophet and his followers which made Islam spread far and wide and not any

power of force or compulsion, as sometimes unjustly alleged. Scholars of comparative religion have affirmed that the message the Prophet delivered to the world is a message of peace and goodwill. Said Mahatama Gandhi, the great Indian Hindu leader:

"In its glorious days Islam was not intolerant. It commanded the admiration of the world.... It was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for the pledges, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and his own mission; these and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle."

Similarly observed an eminent priest, the Rev. Lacy O Leary, D.D.:

"History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon the conquered races, is one of the most fanatically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated. The Quran is powerful enough to conquer the hearts."

THE ADVENT OF MUHAMMAD FORETOLD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF GOD BE ON HIM)

By Dr. Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah

The advent of the Prophet of Islam had been foretold in the Scriptures. Some of such prophecies are cited here.

1. The Prophecy of Enoch

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." (Jude, 1:14).

This prophecy very clearly refers to the advent of the Prophet of Islam. Enoch was just in the seventh generation of Adam. So, from very ancient times the advent of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had been foretold. This prophecy has been mentioned in the Book of Jude, which is a part of the New Testament. As such, the prophecy had remained unfulfilled until the advent of Jesus. If Jude, who wrote the book quite some time after the advent of Jesus, had any idea of its being fulfilled by any of the Prophets until and including Jesus, he would have mentioned so. Therefore, it is perfectly clear that the prophecy of Enoch awaited to be fulfilled by Muhammad (peace be on him).

The prophecy of the Prophet Enoch is very clearly applicable to Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). It has been admitted by historians and scholars that Prophet Muhammad marched on Mecca with ten thousand devotees. This victory paved the way for the ultimate victory of the religion of Islam.

2. Promise to Abraham

"As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father to many nations.

"Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee." (Genesis, 17:4-5).

Abraham had a son from Hagar whose name was Ishmael; and God said:

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply

him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation." (Genesis, 17:20)

Abraham had to let Ishmael, of minor age, and his wife, Ishmael's mother Hagar, go away from his lodge. The mother and son wandered here and there and ultimately settled down under God's instructions. It is also recorded regarding Ishmael that:

"And God was with the lad and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

"And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran..." (Genesis, 21:20-21)

Abraham became the father of a great nation through his son Isaac. The progeny of Isaac multiplied exceedingly. From them arose the Prophets Moses, David, Ezekiel, Daniel and Jesus.

But Abraham's becoming the father of many nations had to be fulfilled through his elder son Ishmael. According to the above quotation, Ishmael lived in Paran. Paran is the name of the hills which lie between Mecca and Medina in Arabia. In Arabic, these hills are known by the name Faran.

The Bible also mentions the names and whereabouts of the twelve sons of Ishmael. All this leads to the conclusion that the Ishmaelites had settled in Arabia.

The promise made to Abraham to make him a father of many nations was then duly fulfilled through his son Ishmael. It is recorded in the pages of history that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) belonged to the reputable tribe of Quaraish, the descendants of Ishmael.

3. The Prophecies of Moses

Moses addressing the Israelites said:

- (a) "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;" (Deut.,18:15)
- (b) "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut.,18:18)
- (c) "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." (Acts, 3:22)

It is clear from the above quoted prophecies that a Law-Giving Prophet was to be raised after Moses. This prophet had to be from among the Ishmaelites who were the brethren of Israelites. Jesus was from the Israelites. Therefore, the prophecy of Moses clearly refers to the advent of a Prophet (after Jesus) who was to be an Ishmaelite. These prophecies have, as such, been duly fulfilled by the advent of Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him), a descendent of Ishmael.

4. Manifestations Promised

“And he said, the Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.” (Deut., 33:2)

In the above quoted verse, three manifestations of the glory of God have been mentioned. This is an indication about the advent of three different Prophets. That is:

(a) **SINAI**: The first manifestation of Divine glory appeared from Sinai to which a reference is made in the following verse with regard to the advent of Moses:

“And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.” (Exodus, 19:20)

(b) **SEIR**: The second manifestation promised in the prophecy was to take place from Seir. The place known as Seir is the part of the world where miracles of Jesus took place. The name Seir has many different forms. One such form applies to the people who are descendants of Prophet Jacob and are known as Banu Asher. Another serves as a name for the northwestern part of Palestine. Raising up from Seir, therefore, refers to the advent of Jesus.

(c) **PARAN**: The third manifestation of Divine glory was to rise from Paran. In Arabic, Paran is pronounced as Faran. It is the name of the hills which lie between Mecca and Medina. This manifestation, therefore, clearly refers to the advent of Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him), the Prophet of Islam.

5. The Time of Jesus

The Bible says that people asked John the Baptist and asked him if he was the Christ, and he answered:

“I am not the Christ.” (John, 1:20)

Then they asked him:

“And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that Prophet? And he answered, No.” (John, 1:21)

“And they asked him and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet?” (John, 1:25)

This clearly means that in the time of Jesus, three prophecies were awaiting fulfilment:

- (a) The second advent of Elias.
- (b) The Christ
- (c) That Prophet.

These prophecies were fulfilled in the following manner:

The prophecy of the second coming of Elias was fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist. According to the account given in Luke, Prophet Zachariah, even before the birth of his son John, had a revelation that his son will have the power and spirit of Elias:

“And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias...” (Luke, 1:17)

Jesus says that the prophecy of the second coming of Elias has been fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist:

“For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

“And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.” (Matt., 11:13-14)

“But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not.” (Matt., 17:12)

“But I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come.” (Mark 9:13)

The prophecy regarding Christ was, of course, fulfilled with the advent of Jesus. We read:

“And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.” (Mark, 8:29)

“Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?” (Matt., 27:17)

It is clear that two of the three prophecies current in the time of Jesus had duly been fulfilled. Whereas the third prophecy pertaining to *that Prophet* awaited its fulfilment with

the advent of the Prophet of Islam.

6. Prophecies of Jesus

Jesus prophesied the advent of *that Prophet* in many ways. Some such references are cited here:

“...It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (John, 16:7)

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.” (John, 16:12-13)

“...The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof.” (Matt., 21:43)

A comparison of the above quotations with the prophecies of Moses given above (Deut. 18:18) clearly indicates that Jesus was talking of the same Prophet prophesied by Moses.

Prophecies Fulfilled

All the prophecies pertaining to a universal Prophet were duly fulfilled with the advent of Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). Almighty Allah has commanded the Holy Prophet of Islam to declare:

“Say, ‘O mankind, truly I am a messenger to you all from Allah.’” (Holy Quran, 7:159)

Muhammad literally means much praised. It is recorded: “Allah sends down His blessings on the Prophet and His angels pray for him. O ye who believe, you too should invoke His blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace.” (Holy Quran, 33:57)

The Muslims, therefore, shower their salutations as:

“O Allah, shower Thy Mercy and Blessings upon Muhammad and his followers, ... for verily Thou art the Praiseworthy and the Lord of Honor.” (Darood Shareef)

Much praised in name and much praised in actions, peace and blessings of God be upon you, O Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam!

MUHAMMAD, THE UNIFIER OF MANKIND

By Professor Khalil Ahmad Nasir, Ph.D.
Director, International Studies, C.W. Post Center, New York

The Prophet Muhammad claimed to be a messenger of God entrusted with the mission of bringing about a total spiritual and social change. Any change of such monumental dimensions implies a complete crumbling of the old structure and its replacement with an entirely new order.

However, those who prefer to cling on to the old values tend to resist the introduction of the reform violently and ruthlessly. It is only natural that the people to whom the new message is directed become divided between those who accept it and those who reject and oppose it.

Since the opposition, usually possessing much larger numbers, starts to persecute the minority composed of those who choose to embrace the new revelation in its early period, in due course, their division starts to become permanent. The steady growth and success of the new message in the face of strong resistance leads its opponents into even more bitter and more ruthless activities.

Although this divisiveness may result from the introduction of fundamental reforms meant to change any aspect of the society — social, economic or political — the change meant to be brought about by a spiritual message inevitably causes a deep split. The very mission of the divine reforms is to uproot the old and false dogmas and corrupt practices. It is only natural, therefore, that those who accept the message become the victims of persecution inflicted upon them by those who prefer to follow the old system. Division and friction between the two groups tends to go deep and acquire a permanent character.

The object of a spiritual reformer is to sift the truth from falsehood, to build a new order and to create new perspectives on the destruction of the old. However, it is just one part of his mission. He must also provide means to eliminate the bitter split caused between his followers and his opponents. He should bring solace to the aggrieved hearts of those who consider that their age-old order has been wrecked by the divine mission. He

has to apply the balm that heals the emotional wounds.

In other words, the spiritual reformer should be a leader not only of the establishment of the new order but also of the process of unification. He should provide the means by which the old hostilities can be completely wiped out and real brotherhood can emerge among the former opponents.

Muhammad as a Spiritual Reformer

Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, stands as a unique and outstanding example of a reformer who, as a part of his divine mission, laid solid and firm foundations of such unification. Both through his teachings as well as his performance, he set in motion the process of bringing together all people including those of his time as well those of all times to come.

Let us briefly review some of the teachings and precepts of the Prophet in order to better appreciate his role as a unifier of mankind.

The Setting

The complexity and the immensity of Prophet Muhammad's mission of unification can be properly understood only when it is realized how sweeping a change Islam had set in motion.

Here were a people who had become polytheistic and who had worshipped idols over several centuries. Muhammad conveyed to them the message that there is none to be worshipped but one God and that the idols and man made objects of worship have no place in the uncompromising monotheism of Islam.

Here were a people who had developed social practices almost completely contrary to the Islamic values. Excessive drinking, gambling, decoity, promiscuity, infanticide of the females and many other ills of their social fibre could not be tolerated by the social order that Muhammad offered, first to the Arabs, and then to the rest of mankind.

The pre-Islamic social fabric was interwoven with widespread slavery. The status of women in this social structure was woefully inferior — hardly above the other objects of property. It is all too obvious that the social and moral order of Islam would have demanded such a total change that a wide gulf between the believers and the non believers had to become absolutely inevitable.

The message of the Prophet Muhammad aimed to transform

the Arab people in their spiritual beliefs, their moral practices as well as their social structure. The reaction by his adversaries was consequently violent and furious. It took the form of a systematic and determined persecution of the Muslims to the extent that they were forced to flee from Mecca for other places of refuge. Some went as far as Ethiopia while others migrated to Medina.

The agonizing experience of thirteen long years in Mecca of torture inflicted upon the Muslims could have by itself been a bitter and unforgettable one. Time after time, the Meccans raised armies and marched towards Medina with the specific purpose of completely uprooting the delicate and young sapling of Islam. Over and over again they were driven back. Thus the spiritual and social order of Islam came into direct clash with the previously established system. A wide rift was bound to develop between the two people. This gap could be bridged only by a unifying message and a magnanimous example of the divine teacher.

Muhammad's Teachings

It is in this context that one should look at the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. People were called upon to believe in a God who is the Lord, Creator and Sustainer of all mankind, in all the universe — not just those who have been brought to the fold of Islam. Muhammad, himself, has been described in the Quran as the fountain of mercy and compassion for all universes.

The believers were instructed that God's sustenance comes to all people regardless of their origin and background. They were enjoined to believe in, and translate into practice, the concepts of equality and brotherhood of mankind. How could Islam, therefore, compromise with any system to its own concept of social order? Notwithstanding the painful memories of the persecutions suffered by the Muslims they were exhorted to forgive and forget. They had to accept Islam as the message of a universal content. Anybody accepting its teachings had to be cheerfully embraced in the fold regardless of color, creed, economic status or any other distinction.

The Muslims were repeatedly told that the concept of brotherhood extended not only over all Arabs — the believers and non believers — but over all mankind. "No Arab is superior

to a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab is superior to the Arab," said the Prophet.

The believers were also enjoined upon to manifest this unity first among themselves by "holding fast to the rope of Allah" unitedly.

These were the teachings upon which the foundations of a unifying mission were laid. But, let us briefly look at the Prophet's own performance.

Muhammad, the Exemplar

It has been observed earlier that the very nature of the task of building a new spiritual and social order inherently leads to dissension. The reaction of the Meccans was translated into persecution of the crudest and most inhuman kind.

Among those who accepted the message of Prophet Muhammad in the Meccan period were many who were poor, lowly and in servitude. They became the primary victims of the wrath of the Meccans although almost every believer, including Muhammad himself, suffered in varying degrees.

This ordeal was experienced both individually as well as collectively when a social and economic boycott was imposed upon the small number of Muslims denying them even the very basic necessities of life. Several wars were waged against the Prophet to the very last years of his life. The oppressors did not cease their persecution until such time that Muhammad was enabled to lead his followers victoriously from his place of refuge, Medina, back to his place of birth, Mecca.

At this historic moment of great triumph, the memories of the terrible persecutions and sufferings of the preceding two decades were only too painfully fresh in the minds of the Prophet and his companions. One would have ordinarily expected at this time a just punishment of those who had perpetrated such barbarous cruelties against the believers.

Those who were banished were now ready to enter and take over Mecca. The fugitive had become the victor. But would he also become the winner of the hearts of the Meccan people? Would he be the Unifier who would bring the long-separated brothers together? Would he apply the spiritual balm that heals the deepest wounds of the heart?

The Great Unifier of mankind, at this historic moment, chose the path of magnanimity and forgiveness. Instead of

reproof and punishment of his deadliest enemies, he extended the hand of brotherhood and reconciliation. Not a drop of blood was spilled, nor a single life taken. The victim and the vanquished, the oppressor and the persecuted, the tyrant and the banished, all were unified in the permanent bond of Islam. That was indeed a unique moment in the history of mankind.

To the Monarchs of the World

On the one hand the hearts of the Meccan adversaries were won, on the other, the Prophet extended his goal of unification to virtually the entire world that could be reached within the limited means of the period of his advent. Personal letters were delivered through special envoys to Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, and the kings of Abyssinia; Egypt, Iran and Bahrain, among others, inviting them to accept the message of Islam. Thus the concept of creating a brotherhood of all mankind under God was firmly established.

To All the People of the Book

At no time did the Prophet take the stand that Islam alone holds a monopoly on truth. The truth of the other messengers and religious scriptures has been recognized and proclaimed repeatedly in the Holy Quran. Belief in all the revelation, not only to the Prophet, but all which came before him, was declared as basic to the acceptance of Islam. "There is not a single people to whom We have not sent a messenger," says the Holy Quran. To the Christians and Jews particularly the message was conveyed that *there is guidance and light in the Torah and the revelations of Jesus and that the Quran contains in it the truth of these books.*

It is obvious that the above-mentioned declarations should go a long way to bring the adherents of Islam and other faiths together. But even more specifically the Quran extended an invitation to *come and join in the proclamation of the true word which is common between us and you.* The path of unification was, thus, clearly laid down for all mankind all over the globe.

The Enemies Become Devoted Followers

The universal message of Islam, its simple and rational teachings combined with the magnetic personality and gracious example of the Prophet were bound to usher in the desired change. The staunch and avowed enemies of the past, once

convinced of the truth of Islam, had now become sincere and true friends. Their bitterness was replaced by an unprecedented devotion. Those who were determined one day to bring the mission of Muhammad to an end were now ready to sacrifice their own lives to its service.

One is reminded, out of the rich history of innumerable cases of those who transformed almost overnight from enemies into friends, of Omar, the Second Khalifa after the Prophet. Eric Schroeder, in *The Muhammad's People*, relates Omar's acceptance as follows:

"Abu Jahl and Omar son of Khattab — the Faith hath no enemies more bitter than those twain, the Apostle of God had said. Omar one day took his sword, saying: I will slay this Sabaeen, this splitter of the Quraysh and blasphemer of their gods. But one stopped him, saying: Would that kindred let thee walk the earth after the slaying of Muhammad, think ye? Were it not better for thee to go back home and keep thine own household in the straight path?

"Who of my household? Omar said.

"Thy brother-in-law and cousin, Sa'id, Zayd's son. Thy sister Fatima. They are both turned Muslim, followers of Muhammad: look thou to them. "Omar turned back raging against them both. Now a certain Muslim, Khabab, was with them in the house. He had a leaf on which was written the chapter Ta Ha of the Koran; and he was reading the chapter aloud. When they heard the noise of Omar's coming, Khabab hid himself in a closet; and Fatima took the leaf and hid it under her thigh.

"But Omar, as he came up to the house, had heard the sound of the reading; he said as he entered: What was that mumbling that I heard?

"Nothing, they answered.

"Ay, but I heard something," Omar said. And I have been told already — ye are become followers of Muhammad in that religion of his.

"And he struck at his brother-in-law Sa'id. But Fatima sprang up to keep him off; the blow fell on her and drew blood. At that deed, they said to him: Ay, we are

Muslims; we believe in God and His Apostle; so do thy will.

"But when he saw the blood upon his sister, he was sorry for indeed. Give me that leaf, he said to her, from which I heard you reading even now, and let me see what it is, the thing Muhammad brought (for Omar could read and write).

"We dare not trust thee with it, his sister answered him.

"Fear not, said he, and swore by his gods that having read it he would give it back. Thereupon, hoping he might even be converted, she said: Brother, thou art unclean, coming from the idolatry — and none may touch this writing save the purified. So Omar went out and washed himself; and she gave him the leaf; and he read the chapter Ta Ha: "Not of thy confusion did We reveal to thee this Koran

"But to recall the fearful to remembrance,

"A revelation from Him Who did create the earth and the high heavens,

"The Merciful, who is established on the throne.

"His is whatsoever is in the heavens, His whatsoever is on earth! His whatsoever goes between, His whatsoever is underground.

"Say aloud, and He knoweth thy hidden thought, Ay, and what is hidden deeper than thy thought.

"God! There is no god but He alone, and beautiful beyond compare are His names.

"Hath there come to thee the story of Moses?

and also at the end of the chapter, where it is written:

"All things wait: Do ye too wait. Ye shall know at the last who had followed the even path, and who hath good guiding.

"How excellent are these words! cried Omar when he had read to the end. No sooner did Khabab hear that than he came out of hiding and said: Omar, it is my hope that God send thee hither in answer to the Apostle's prayer, for but yesterday I heard him pray: God! strengthen Islam with Abu Jahl, or with Omar!

"Khabab, said Omar, take me to Muhammad, for I will go to him and make my Submission to God and be a Muslim."

The message of Islam was meant to create a new way of life. It had to bring about a complete spiritual, moral and social revolution. A distinction between those who accepted and those who rejected was, of course, inevitable. Yet Muhammad's unique attribute of a unifier, of not only the people around him but of all mankind, stands out as one of the shining and glorious chapters of his life.

THE HOLY QURAN: A PERFECT GUIDANCE FOR MANKIND

By Yusuf Amin, Dayton, Ohio

(Being the text of the speech delivered at the last Annual Convention, September, 1974. The scholarly presentation is typical of our American converts to Islam. - Ed.)

I think we can all agree that virtually the whole of mankind today suffers from a lack of a sound and dependable guidance in life.

How often today, and in the last decades, have we heard the most learned of men — renowned scholars and clergymen among them — say: "Where is mankind going? What does the future hold for mankind, at the rate we are going?"

Especially in the western world, but throughout the world, these and similar questions are being asked, only to go unanswered or substantially unanswered. For mankind's multiplicity of problems some people are seeking political solutions, some people are seeking economic solutions, some are seeking social solutions, some are seeking solutions in the maze and riddles of traditional philosophy. Only a few people, alas, are seeking solutions, or at least the basis for solutions, in the various religions and cults of the world.

Some people have despaired of the search for overall solutions to the problems of humanity. Even some learned social critics have come to predict that the problems facing mankind will not be solved. They have come to the conclusion that mankind is hopelessly taking a path to oblivion. But on the collective level, there are still people who are looking for the one perfect blueprint for living a good, contented life. They are looking for a comprehensive *manual of life* which they can follow without fear, doubt or error.

In a world beset by problems and calamities of great magnitude, humanity is groping, often in the dark as it were, for A WAY OUT.

Several years ago, when I was a non-Muslim and I myself was looking for a way out, I had begun to doubt, or at least to wonder, if in all the world there existed that *one perfect path*.

Today, by the Grace of Allah, my questions have been

answered and my doubts have been laid aside. Today I am blessed to know that *one perfect path does exist*, and that there is a *perfect Book* in which this perfect path for living is set forth in detail. That book is the Holy Quran, and I want to explain here and now why the Holy Quran is recognized so widely as the most comprehensive and profound book of spiritual, moral and intellectual guidance in the world.

When one begins to seriously read the Holy Quran one finds that the most eloquent statements on the Holy Quran are to be found in the Holy Quran. So in support of my statements in this regard, most of my references will come from the Holy Quran. So, *Insha Allah*, we will do more than talk about the Holy Quran. We will get into the Holy Quran. What I shall attempt to set forth should be a review of what we're about for those of us who have accepted Islam.

For those who have not yet accepted Islam, we want you to see how a Muslim's conviction develops about his sacred scripture wherein he says, without fear of contradiction, that the Holy Quran is a perfect book of guidance.

I am sure that many of us here today had read many books in search of a workable guide to living, before coming to the Holy Quran; and I am sure also that those of us who found a deep and enduring attachment for the Holy Quran can agree that we have been twice blessed in regards to this:

The first blessing was, of course, coming into the possession or at least the use of the Holy Quran. The second and most profound blessing was that we were blessed to recognize the spiritual, moral and intellectual value of the Holy Quran, and to sense some of the immense scope of what is contained in the Holy Quran.

You were specially blessed when you came to an awareness that this is a book that is **ONE OF A KIND**, a book like no other book anywhere. This is a blessing we should want to share with the whole of mankind — the blessing of being able to not only hold the Holy Quran in our hands but to be able to grasp it in our hearts and in our minds.

INFINITE SCOPE

The Holy Quran contains guidance which can deal effectively with any and all conditions, circumstances and perplexities which confront man in the course of life.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, has said: "The Holy Quran sets before itself the grand and all-embracing object of furnishing a true remedy for all kinds of evil, and gives direction for the guidance of all men."

Before outlining and explaining the scope of the Holy Quran, let us first examine the origin of this all-embracing scope. When one begins to read the Holy Quran, and to read it seriously, one can begin to understand a Muslim's deep conviction about the origin of the Holy Quran: That Allah Himself not only commissioned the revelation of the Holy Quran, but indeed *authored it Himself*.

When one first becomes aware of some of the vast scope of the Holy Quran, one can readily see that no human mind or group of minds could have composed the Holy Quran. The conditions under which the Holy Quran was revealed support this contention.

First of all, the Holy Quran, unlike earlier scriptures, was revealed in the *full light of recorded history*. No part of the Holy Quran is shrouded in legend. It has been firmly established that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) was illiterate. He could not read and could barely write his name. His formal education was quite limited. Yet from the lips of this unlettered desert merchant were to come the *most all-embracing* scriptural material that mankind was ever to hear.

And in this regard, the Holy Quran is the fulfilment of earlier prophecies: In the Bible, in the 18th chapter of Deuteronomy, God says to Moses:

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. 18:18-19)

It has been firmly reasoned and established that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) was only the *transmitter* of the material which comprise the Holy Quran, speaking only what he was compelled to speak, while in a trance-like state. This fulfils the part of the Biblical

prophecy of God's putting His words in the Holy Prophet's mouth. The rest of the prophecy is fulfilled in the Holy Quran, regarding words which would be spoken in God's name.

At the beginning of each and every chapter of the Holy Quran, we read the words: *Bismillah ir Rahman ir Raheem* – In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. Only the Holy Quran fulfills the foregoing prophecy.

Throughout the Holy Quran, Allah identifies Himself in numerous chapters, as the author of the Holy Quran. In many of the 114 chapters of the Holy Quran we find at the outset of each chapter either the words *Alif Lam Meem* or *Alif Lam Ra*, meaning: *I am Allah, the All-knowing; and I am Allah, the All-Seeing.*

God identifies Himself throughout the Holy Quran so that no confusion need develop as to who is setting forth the scripture – not man but God Himself.

Now that we understand something about the origin of the Quran's vast scope, let us see what the Quran itself has to say about this scope. The Holy Quran Says:

“Tell them: If the ocean became ink for transcribing the words of my Lord, surely the ocean would be exhausted before the words of my Lord came to an end, even though we reinforced it with the like thereof.”

And in another verse, the Holy Quran says:

“If all the trees that are in the earth became pens and the ocean became ink, with seven oceans reinforcing it thereafter, the words of Allah would not be exhausted.”

It is significant to note that the followers of other religions, whether they believe in the Divine origin of the Holy Quran or not, must admit that it is far more complete as a guide to conduct than any other code that has come down to mankind. It is far more explicit and far more effective in directing human conscience.

The Holy Quran is a book of simple injunctions and prohibitions. It is direct in its appeal and reasonable in its statements. The language of the Holy Quran is simple, but it rises to great eloquence as occasions may require.

The Holy Quran has guidelines for man on all levels of human endeavors, and also for man in his collective endeavors. The Holy Quran has sound teachings regarding family life,

community life, national affairs and international affairs. But we want to examine here only some of the scope of the Holy Quran as it relates to the individual seeker of truth. The important thing to remember is that, on whatever level man seeks Quranic guidance, he is exhorted to acknowledge and remember his Creator, to hold steadfastly to Islam's teachings and to constantly ask the aid of the Creator in his endeavors.

When we talk to people about true Islam, what they will want to know, in essence, is *what Islam can do for them*, or *what they can get out of Islam*. Persons who will seriously examine Ahmadiyyat will first examine it on the most essential level, which is the individual level.

People can agree that, if man begins to solve his problems on the individual level — and does so to the detriment of no one — that man's collective problems lend themselves to much easier solution. And while one man cannot literally solve all of the problems of this world, he can, with proper guidance and the help of Allah, solve his own problems and thus enhance his life; and the world is at least that much better for it.

The Holy Quran sets forth explicit and effective teachings for man's overall individual development. It sets forth direction in regard to one's physical development and well-being, one's intellectual development, one's moral development, and one's spiritual development; and the Holy Quran shows clearly the relationship between these elements of man's being.

Let us examine some of those verses in the Holy Quran which bear on man's overall development, starting with those which pertain to man's physical sustenance. It teaches us to eat good wholesome food, and to do so in moderation. It tells us that what we eat has a great bearing on our moral development and conduct, and on our spiritual development. Says the Holy Quran:

“O ye who believe, eat of the good things We have provided for you, and render thanks to Allah, if it is He Whom you really worship.

“He has made unlawful for you only that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of the swine, and that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked. But he who is driven by necessity, being neither disobedient nor exceeding the limit, it shall be no sin for him. Surely Allah

is Most Forgiving, Merciful." (2: 173-174).
Again we read in the Holy Quran:

"O children of Adam! take your adornment at every time and place of worship, and eat and drink, but be not immoderate; surely, He does not love those who are immoderate." (7:32).

Also we read:

"O ye Messengers, eat of the pure things and do good work. Verily, I am well aware of what you do."

These are just some of the representative verses which bear on diet and moderation for the enhancement of man's physical well-being. And no less than 19 verses in the Holy Quran offer injunctions in regard to this.

The fact that there is a deep and subtle connection between the food that a person eats and his actions, good or bad, has now begun to be increasingly recognized by medical science. But the Holy Quran laid down as far back as 1400 years ago directions relating to food which possess great moral significance. The basic principle laid down by the Holy Quran in this regard is that, as man must develop all of his natural instincts and faculties, therefore, he should partake of all kinds of foods, except those which are likely to do him spiritual, moral and physical harm. The use of pure and good food produces healthy mental condition, which in turn produces good and righteous actions.

The Holy Quran forbids most emphatically the use of alcoholic drinks by saying:

"O ye who believe! wine and the game of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handwork. So shun each of them that you may prosper."

The Holy Quran sets good direction for man in regard to his intellectual development. By teaching him that wisdom is a blessing and a mercy from Allah. It allays man's conceit by teaching him that the love and fear of Allah is the sum total of real wisdom.

Allah, not man, is the bestower of knowledge, wisdom and understanding; man is just Allah's instrument. The most eloquent words in this regard were, in fact, the first words revealed to the Holy Prophet, when his prophethood began, in the cave on Mount Hira. We read:

“Proclaim thou in the name of thy Lord Who created,
“Created man from a clot of blood.
“Proclaim! And thy Lord is the most Bounteous;
“Who taught by the pen,
“Taught man that he knew not.
“Nay! man, indeed, transgresses,
“Because he thinks himself to be independent.

We also read thus:

“Allah grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good; and none would take heed except those endowed with understanding. (2:270).

Many, many more verses in the Holy Quran deal in depth with the subject of man's intellectual development. And the Holy Quran exhorts man that the path to good intellectual development is through regular prayer and the use of his reasoning faculty.

Let us consider some eloquent and profound Quranic verses which bear on man's moral and spiritual development. As we read these verses, let us note how explicit and self explanatory they are. The Holy Quran teaches us that Allah is merciful to those who, for lack of knowledge of what constitutes good morals, do not practice good morals. Says the Holy Quran:

“Verily, Allah accepts the repentance of only those who do evil in ignorance and then repent soon after. These are they to whom Allah turns with mercy; and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.” (4:18)

The Holy Quran teaches man what constitutes good morals. The proper use of natural instincts under the guidance of reason and judgement constitutes good morals. And, of course, the Holy Quran thoroughly outlines proper use of natural instincts. A sampling of the many verses which outline proper use of natural instincts are given below. In these verses, Allah tells us what to say to those who ask us about moral conduct:

“Say, ‘Come, I will recite to you what your Lord has forbidden, that you associate not anything as partner with Him; and that you do good to parents, and that you slay not your children for fear of poverty — it is We Who provide for you and for them — and that you approach not foul deeds, whether open or secret; and that you slay not

the soul the slaying of which Allah has forbidden, save in accordance with the demands of justice. That is what He has enjoined upon you, that you may understand.

“And approach not the property of the orphan, except in a way which is best, till he attains his maturity. And give full measure and weight with equity. We charge not any soul except according to its capacity. And when you speak, observe justice, even if the person concerned be a relative, and fulfil the covenant of Allah. That is what He enjoins upon you, that you may take care.

“And say, ‘This is my straight path. So follow it; and follow not other ways, that they lead you away from His way. That is what He enjoins upon you, that you may be able to guard against evils.’” (6: 152-154).

The Holy Quran teaches us that morals encompass more than our manifest conduct, but also our undisclosed thoughts, which are known only to Allah. It says:

“...Whether you disclose what is in your minds or keep it hidden, Allah will call you to account for it, then He will forgive whomsoever He pleases and punish whomsoever He pleases; and Allah has the power to do all that He wills.” (2: 285).

This last verse gives us a clue as to what might begin to constitute good spiritual development. Man’s spiritual development begins when he begins to acknowledge Allah as the absolute and final arbitrator in his affairs and in the affairs of all people. And when man steadfastly begins to observe the injunctions set forth by Allah through His messengers, and begins to see the reason and benefit in doing so, he is on the road to sound spiritual progress. In this regard the Holy Quran says:

“There is no compulsion in religion. Surely, the right way has become distinct from error; so whosoever refuses to be led by those who transgress, and believes in Allah, he surely grasped a strong handle which knows no breaking. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”

One point which I cannot emphasize too strongly is this: Spiritual development does not depend solely on intellectual endeavor. The desire for nearness to Allah is what brings one to spiritual progress. Intellectual gymnastics will not bring you to

spiritual progress.

Spiritual progress comes from putting the pleasure of Allah above all things and remaining steadfast. The Holy Quran gives us the example of the followers of the prophets of old as models of what we should strive to become. We read in the Quran:

“And many a Prophet there has been beside whom fought numerous companies of their followers. They slackened not for aught that befall them in the way of Allah, nor did they weaken, nor did they humiliate themselves before the enemy. And Allah loves the steadfast.

“And they uttered not a word except that they said, ‘Our Lord, forgive us our sins and our excesses in our conduct, and make firm our steps and help us against the disbelieving people.

“So Allah gave them the reward of this world, as also an excellent reward of the Hereafter; and Allah loves those who do good.” (3: 147-149).

While intellect alone does not guarantee man spiritual progress, spiritual progress is much more likely if he has understanding. And to aid man in this quest for understanding, the Holy Quran answers clearly, concisely and comprehensively the deep theological questions which have perplexed man since the beginning of time.

The Holy Quran explains clearly the purpose of man's creation. It leads man to a certainty of knowledge of God's existence, and to understanding of his relationship to his Creator. It sets forth most coherent and sensible perspectives on life after death, and on the nature of Heaven and Hell. Let us examine some of these very unique perspectives, as the Holy Quran treats of these: It teaches that man has been created to serve as a manifestation of Allah's attributes and to illustrate them in his life. We read:

“And I have not created the jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.” (51:57).

Again:

“He it is Who made you successors in the earth...” (35:40)

This brings us to the proof of Allah's existence. Much that we witness in our own experience, when we examine it in the light of reason, provide convincing proof of Allah's existence. We can

all agree that no *effect* is ever witnessed or experienced without there first being a *cause* which produces the given effect. When we notice how much and how well man is provided for in this world, common sense tells us that there must be a provider.

Again, as we look about us in the universe and in the world, we see an amazing order established and preserved. In this regard the Holy Quran says:

“It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor the night outstrip the day. All of them float smoothly in an orbit.”

The order such as this which we can see evidences the existence of One who keeps this order; and the Holy Quran identifies the keeper of this order. It says:

“Our Lord is He Who gave unto everything its proper form and guided it to its proper function.” (20:51).

Again:

“And the whole system of cause and effect ends with thy Lord.”

In regards to man's worldly provisions, we read:

“O ye men! worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you, that you may guard against evil.

“Who made the earth a bed for you, and the heaven a roof, and caused water to come down from the clouds and therewith brought forth fruits for your sustenance; so do not set up equals to Allah, while you know.” (2:22-23).

These verses are just a few which evidence Allah's existence. Verses regarding the signs of Allah, for instance, provide sound evidence. Other verses pertaining to His attributes provide sound evidence of His existence. But time will not permit us to go into these. However, the Holy Quran provides more reasoned, clear and convincing arguments for the existence of Allah than does any other scripture; and the Holy Quran issues a challenge to those who dispute its contents on this subject and on any other subject. The disbeliever, when he disputes the Holy Quran, should be led to read the following verses:

“And if you are in doubt as to what We have sent down to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it, and call upon your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.

“But if you do it not — and never shall you do it — then guard against the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for the disbelievers.” (2:24-25).

What else can we say on this, except that in 1400 years none of the enemies of Islam have successfully picked up this challenge.

The reference in the last verse quoted brings up the next topic: Life after death, Heaven and Hell. The Holy Quran teaches us that there is life after death. It says:

“What! Did you then think that We had created you without purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us?” (23:116)

Regarding hell we read:

“Those whom the angels cause to die while they are wronging their souls, will offer submission, pleading, ‘We used not to do any evil.’ It will be said to them, ‘Nay, surely, Allah knows well what you used to do.’

“So enter the gates of Hell, to abide therein. Evil indeed is the abode of the arrogant.” (16:29-30).

The next three verses of the same chapter tell us of heaven:

“And when it is said to the righteous, ‘What think ye of that which your Lord has revealed?’ They say, ‘The best.’ For those who do good there is good in this world, and the home of the hereafter is even better. Excellent indeed is the abode of the righteous.

“Gardens of eternity, which they will enter; through them flow streams. They will have therein what they wish for. Thus does Allah reward the righteous.

Those whom the angels cause to die while they are pure, they say to them, ‘Peace be unto you. Enter Heaven because of what you used to do.’” (16:31:33)

Elsewhere in the Holy Quran we find verses which teach us that heaven is the place of continuous spiritual progress; and we find that hell is not eternal, but is of finite duration, according to how long the spiritual rehabilitation of the particular person takes.

As one can see from the material we have been examining, the scope of the Holy Quran is quite vast, and surely far exceeds the scope of any other scripture. But vastness of the scope alone does not make it the perfect guidance that it is. The factor of universal application contributes to its perfection as a guidance for all mankind.

The Holy Quran has universal application for mankind. It is

the first scripture that was addressed to the whole of mankind for their benefit.

Aside from the vast scope and universal application of the Holy Quran as a book of guidance, another factor which contributes to its perfection is that it is a book for all times. Quranic teachings are applicable for all ages in the span of time; present and future, just as in the past. In regard to the vast scope, universal application and adaptability of the Holy Quran to all ages and times, it makes the claim:

“This is a perfect book. There is no doubt in it. It is a guidance for the righteous.” (2:3)

This is one of the most significant declarations ever made in regard to a religious scripture. No other scripture purports or even suggests, let alone declare, that it is a perfect book.

I want you to read it and try to find out why this is so; because if you read it, sincerely and thoroughly and with an open mind, someday you will want to tell me why it is a perfect book.

PROPHET'S DAY CELEBRATIONS AT THE LONDON MOSQUE

(With the passing of Oriental studies in the West from the hands of Christian missionaries into those of independent scholars, appreciation of the Prophet of Islam and his message is steadily growing in the West. The following report on the meeting held at the London Mosque, addressed among Muslims by several distinguished dignitaries, is a case in point. Similar meetings on Seeratun Nabi were also held across North America at numerous places.—Ed.

Welcoming more than 500 guests to the London Mosque in Southfields on the birthday of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, on Sunday, 13th April, 1975, the Mayor of Wandsworth, H.W. Councillor A. J. Hill said that the history of Wandsworth proved that no one had been treated a stranger in the Borough. The London mosque has stood on its present site now for 51 years. Councillor Hill remarked that the world would be a better place if people took to heart and lived upto the teaching of the Prophet of Islam.

Mr. Tom Cox, M.P. Tooting, paid tribute to the large Pakistan Community who he said lived an honorable life and were an asset to the Borough that has done a lot to foster good community relationship. He added, "I am proud to be the representative of more than 11,000 Asian voters in my constituency."

Mr. Clifford Cohen, a student Rabbi of the Kingston Liberal Jewish Synagogue spoke at the meeting in honor of the Prophet of Islam. He felt that there was no reason why the process of close dialogue which had continued between Muslims and Jews should now stop.

Representing the World Congress of Faith, its Executive, Prof. Harmandar Singh, reminded the audience that the character of the Prophet was the Holy Quran which gives guidance on the relationship that should exist between man and God and between men.

Sir Zafrulla Khan, the former President of the International Court of Justice at the Hague and a President of the United Nations General Assembly at one time, said that the Prophet had been sent as a mercy to mankind and that various aspects from his everyday life showed why he is called an Excellent Exemplar for the rest of mankind.

The meeting was presided over by H.E. Alhaj S. Janneh, the High Commissioner for the Gambia. The Imam of the London Mosque, Mr. B. A. Rafiq, in his welcoming address also introduced the distinguished guests to the audience.

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was founded by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (1835-1908), the Promised Messiah. The Ahmadiyya Movement seeks to uplift humanity and to establish peace throughout the world through living and preaching Islam. It has its headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan, with Hazrat Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih III. The Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world. The following are the addresses of some of them.

AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MISSIONS

AFRICA

GHANA: P.O. Box 39, Salt Pond

GAMBIA: P.O. Box 6, Banjul

IVORY COAST: P. O. Box 3416,
Adjame, Abidjan.

KENYA: P.O. Box 40554, Nairobi.

LIBERIA: P.O. Box 618, Monrovia.

MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 6, Rose Hill.

NIGERIA: P.O. Box 418, Lagos.

SIERRA LEONE: P.O. Box 11, Bo.
P. O. Box 353, Freetown.

SOUTH AFRICA: Mr. M.G.Ibrahim,
P.O. Box 4195, Capetown.

TANZANIA: P.O. Box 376,
Dar es Salaam.

UGANDA: P.O. Box 343, Kampala.

AMERICA

CANADA: 163 Belsize Drive,
Toronto, Ontario.

GUYANA: Lot No. 1, Lamaha &
Albert Street, Georgetown.

TRINIDAD: Mr. Hanif Yacoob,
Upper Caripichaima,
Calcutta Settlement.

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